

Additions and annotations to the avifauna of Congo-Kinshasa (ex-Zaire)

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Lippens & Wille (1976) summarized what was known of the avifauna of the country then named Zaire, and that has since 1997 returned to its former name Congo (hereafter named Congo-Kinshasa, to avoid confusion with its neighbour on the northern bank of the River Congo, the Popular Republic of Congo or Congo-Brazzaville). Since 1976, a number of additions to their list have been published, which have recently been brought together in an updated checklist for the country by Dowsett (1993). The present paper adds further records, based on observations in the field and examination of skins at the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) at Tervuren, Belgium. Observations were made by the authors while resident in the country (RD 1988–1990, PH 1950–1960, TP 1990–1996), and by other observers, indicated by their initials in the text and named in the Acknowledgements. Records not followed by initials are thus our own; if other observers were also present, they are mentioned with a (+). All skins were examined by PH. For the sake of completeness we have, in some cases, included already published records which appear to have been overlooked by the major reference works. This paper is primarily intended as a supplement to Lippens & Wille (1976) and Dowsett (1993); reference should be made to the former to interpret fully the records given here, although we give a brief summary of the previously known status at the end of each species account. Where appropriate, reference has been made to *The birds of Africa* (Brown *et al.* 1982, Urban *et al.* 1986, Fry *et al.* 1988, Keith *et al.* 1992, Urban *et al.* 1997) to put the records into perspective or to indicate inaccuracies or inadequacies.

The information given includes the following: (1) twelve species (marked with *) recorded from Congo-Kinshasa for the first time or not mentioned by Dowsett (1993); (2) range extensions within the country; (3) additional information on species considered rare or threatened or for which there are few published records; (4) miscellaneous data on breeding, moult, vocalizations etc.

Names of towns and administrative entities have been subject to changes in the history of the country. Names of major towns and provinces used here are those in usage today and are identical to those in usage when the country was still Zaire, except for the regions Bas-Zaire, Haut-Zaire and Shaba, which have become the provinces Bas-Congo, Orientale and Katanga respectively. However, the names of smaller administrative divisions dating from colonial times (when provinces were divided into districts, subdivided into territories) have been retained for records from that period, in order to facilitate comparison with already published data. For locations: see Appendix. The abbreviation NP stands for National Park. Sequence and nomenclature mainly follow *The birds of Africa* vols. I–V, complemented by Dowsett & Forbes-Watson (1993).

WHITE-CRESTED TIGER HERON *Tigrionis leucolophus*

In the Equateur province, nests with eggs or young were found in the south-eastern Tshuapa district in September, October (Herroelen 1955), December and January, whereas near Mbandaka nestlings were found in January, May and June, and in the north-western Ubangi district in October, December and May (VM). Neither Lippens & Wille (1976) nor Brown *et al.* (1982) mention any laying dates for Congo-Kinshasa.

BLACK HERON *Egretta ardesiaca*

Vitshumbi, Virunga NP, 24 April 1993, one. Rarely recorded in the Kivu region. All published records are from single birds on the southern shores of Lake Edward, the last in 1971 (Bataille *et al.* 1972, Verschuren 1978).

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

Breeds in tall *Ceiba pentandra* trees in the swamp forests of the Ngiri, between the Ubangi and Congo Rivers, Equateur province (Vrijdagh 1954). Also recorded breeding in following territories: Kungu and Budjala, Ubangi district (AD, PRa & AP); 80–100 nests in tall trees in Bomongo, Equateur district (RDo); three colonies in Bikoro, Equateur district, April 1959 (Herroelen 1960). According to local inhabitants nesting also occurred on the lower Ngiri, at Bokwokoto and Gundu. Ten adults, 13 nestlings and three clutches were collected at Bokala-Budjala, December 1957, by PH's collector (specimens in RMCA). Lippens & Wille (1976), although stating that important breeding areas occur in the 'cuvette centrale', only mention Lake Mai-Ndombe, in N Bandundu.

SHOEBILL *Balaeniceps rex*

Virunga NP: Lulimbi, 16 and 17 May 1992, one with 45 Openbilled Storks *Anastomus lamelligerus*; Vitshumbi, March 1994, one (TG) and 20 April 1994, one (ML). There are only about ten published records from NE Congo-Kinshasa, all from the Lake Edward area (Curry-Lindahl 1961, Bataille *et al.* 1972, Verschuren 1978, Mertens 1986). but according to Mertens (1986) the species was seen several times at Lake Tchabuganga in 1966–1972.

SPOT-BREASTED IBIS *Bostrychia rara*

Precise laying dates for Congo-Kinshasa are lacking in Lippens & Wille (1976) and Brown *et al.* (1982). In the Equateur province, breeding activities recorded as follows: Lukolela, 26 September 1930, a female almost ready to lay collected (Chapin 1932); Bolima, 6 August 1954, a nest containing two young (Herroelen 1955); Bwamanda, 8 October 1959, a nestling collected; Bwamanda, 22 December 1961, a nest with two young (Schouteden 1962); Bokilio, 8 December 1964, a nest with two young (VM).

LESSER FLAMINGO *Phoeniconaias minor*

Goma, N Kivu, 28 September 1991, 23 flying northwards. There are few records from Congo-Kinshasa, all, except two, from the Lake Edward area: September 1960, 250–300; August 1961, several; August 1971, up to four; February–May 1974,

unsuccessful breeding attempt by *c.* 1,000 birds; in 1976, 1000s were reported to be still present, but by the end of 1977 all had gone; April 1988, 3,000+, with some visiting a site 60 km to the south; the birds were said to arrive yearly around January and to leave around September–October; in 1990 only a few were reported (Verschuren 1966, 1978 and 1991, Lippens & Wille 1976). There are two records from Banana, Congo River mouth: April 1952, 50 and July 1953, 200 (Mesmaekers 1953).

WHITE-BACKED DUCK *Thalassornis leuconotus*

Mongala district, NE Equateur, three juveniles collected on 6 January 1957, 30 November 1957 and 2 October 1958 respectively; Ubangi district, NW Equateur, two observed at Bokilio, 6 December 1964 (VM). Two birds were reportedly collected at the other side of the border, at Botambi, Central African Republic, on 26 November 1970, but the specimens could not be found and the species has been deleted from the country list (Dowsett *et al.* 1999). The occurrence of this species in NW Congo-Kinshasa is not mapped in Lippens & Wille (1976) nor in Brown *et al.* (1982). Breeding in the country is poorly known and has only been proved for E Kasaï, with four nestlings collected at Kasansa in July 1952 (Van Assche 1954 and *in litt.*).

***GADWALL** *Anas strepera*

Boguela, NE Equateur, 6 January 1957, an immature female collected and originally misidentified as Pintail *A. acuta*. The specimen, preserved at the RMCA, was re-identified by PH (Maes 1993). This Palearctic migrant, which winters mainly in NE Africa, is reported as “rarely recorded” in Congo-Kinshasa by Curry-Lindahl (1981) and as vagrant to the country by Brown *et al.* (1982); no details or references are given, however, and the source of these statements could not be traced.

COMMON TEAL *Anas crecca*

Garamba NP, 26 December 1951, an adult male collected. Third record for Congo-Kinshasa. The two earlier records were of immature female specimens obtained at Buta, Uele, 4 February 1935, and along the upper Semliki River, 11 December 1935 (Chapin 1954). All three specimens at RMCA.

[COMMON POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Bataille *et al.* (1972) mention a sighting of two moulting males at the ‘lagune de Kasoso’, on the south-eastern shores of Lake Edward, 9 August 1971. This record, the only one to date, is not included in Lippens & Wille (1976) nor in Dowsett (1993). However, Brown *et al.* (1982) state that “very small numbers” of this species reach Congo-Kinshasa and on the accompanying map the north-eastern border area is indicated; unfortunately, no details or references are given, and the source of this statement could not be traced. Curry-Lindahl (1981) states that it has been recorded in “Zaire”, but does not give references. This Palearctic species is a fairly common migrant to central Sudan, October–March (Nikolaus 1987) but is rarely recorded at lower latitudes, in Uganda, Kenya and N Tanzania, from November to March (Britton 1980, Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). Given the odd date of the Lake Edward record and

the fact that it would constitute the first for the country, it cannot be accepted without further details.]

AFRICAN CUCKOO HAWK *Aviceda cuculoides*

Breeding: a nest with one egg, Tshuapa district, Equateur, 13 October 1951 (Herroelen 1955). No laying dates for Congo-Kinshasa in Brown *et al.* (1982).

BLACK KITE *Milvus migrans*

In the Equateur province, birds return in September–October and either occupy a nest from the previous year or start building a new nest; nest building may continue till December. Nests contain young during the low-water season, end December–April; young fledge mid March–mid May.

In the north-east of the country, in the Oriental province, Chapin (1932) found five nests with eggs and young in February–March. In the south-east, in Upemba NP, Verheyen (1953) noted egg-laying and incubation during the dry season, in July–August. Brown *et al.* (1982) give no breeding data for Congo-Kinshasa.

[EGYPTIAN VULTURE *Neophron percnopterus*

A sighting of an adult is claimed from Songa, 70 km north of Kamina, Katanga, 26 January 1984 (CR). Chapin (1932) and Lippens & Wille (1976) accept one previous claim, from SE Katanga, but according to Dowsett (1993 and *in litt.*) the occurrence of this species requires proof and records from south-central Africa should be treated with extreme caution, as sight records from Zambia are now believed to be misidentifications (of, for example, Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*). Therefore, the species cannot yet be accepted for the country.]

***RÜPPELL'S GRIFFON VULTURE** *Gyps rueppellii*

Virunga NP: Lulimbi, September 1981 and 4 January 1982, one photographed (Mertens 1986); 25 October 1992 and 4 April 1993, two adults; Vitshumbi-Mwega, May 1989, one photographed (Verschuren 1991); Rwindi, September 1989, one photographed (Delvingt *et al.* 1990). Garamba NP, 14 February 1994, one adult. Local in neighbouring Uganda (Britton 1980) and mainly a dry season visitor to southern Sudan (Nikolaus 1987). Distribution map in Brown *et al.* (1982) shows range extending into NE Congo-Kinshasa, although there were no known records then.

BROWN SNAKE EAGLE *Circaetus cinereus*

An adult ringed at Assen, South Africa, 3 March 1974, was killed near Kabinda, E Kasai, 16 January 1981 (Oatley 1983); the bird had thus covered some 2,100 km. Brown *et al.* (1982) only mention irregular local movements.

BLACK-BREASTED SNAKE EAGLE *Circaetus gallicus pectoralis*

Garamba NP, 14 and 15 February 1994 (+LE & ML); 8, 10 and 11 February 1996 (MS & PR). Northernmost records in Congo-Kinshasa, but recorded (including breeding) just across the border in SE Sudan (Nikolaus 1987).

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo vulpinus*

Two records from the north-west, in Equateur: one collected at Bwamanda, 15 November 1957, and another shot at Iyonda, near Mbandaka, October or November 1954; of the latter only a few rectrices were preserved and subsequently identified by Chapin as belonging to this taxon (GM). Formerly known from the eastern part of the country only. There are, however, a few records further west, from NE Gabon (several) and Congo-Brazzaville (three) (Malbrant & Maclatchy 1949, Brosset & Erard 1986, Dowsett-Lemaire *et al.* 1993).

***NORTHERN CROWNED CRANE** *Balearica pavonina*

Garamba NP, occasional visitor observed in March–April (KS). Formerly known to occur as far south as the border area with Congo-Kinshasa in Sudan eastwards to N Uganda (Urban *et al.* 1986, Nikolaus 1987). In E Congo-Kinshasa its southern congener *B. regulorum* occurs north to Lake Albert and Nioka (pers. obs.).

PIED AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Lulimbi, Virunga NP, 25 April 1992, 11; 26 April 1992, two (+ML); 16 May 1992, 13. Previously only one definite record, of a bird trapped at Lake Edward, 19 October 1971 (Lippens & Wille 1976). The record of a specimen said to have been collected at Banana, at the mouth of the Congo River, in 1816, was thought to need confirmation, as the bird might have been taken elsewhere (Chapin 1939).

GREY PRATINCOLE *Glareola cinerea*

In Equateur, PH found proof of breeding in February (nest scrapes) and March (nest containing one egg) and in July (19 clutches). These data suggest two breeding periods. Chapin (1939) mentions a nest containing a single egg at Lukolela on 9 August; Lippens & Wille (1976) found two nests in neighbouring Bandundu province, at Lake Mai-Ndombe, on 29 June, and along the Kwango River, on 7 July. Urban *et al.* (1986) do not mention laying dates for Congo-Kinshasa.

LESSER SAND PLOVER *Charadrius mongolus*

Lulimbi, Virunga NP, 24 and 25 October 1992, two (+ML); 4 April 1993, two (+ML). Ten birds are said to have been ringed at Lulimbi during the period 1970–1975 (d'Huart 1977), but as no notes on these records are available, they are best considered as in need of confirmation (Dowsett 1980). Lippens & Wille (1976) mention only one record.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Muanda, Bas-Congo, 21 March 1991, one. Lulimbi, Virunga NP, 24 October 1992, one (+ML). Apparently rarely recorded in Congo-Kinshasa. We have traced twelve previous records, from following localities: Banana, Bas-Congo (three specimens, November and December); Muanda, Bas-Congo (one specimen, February); Bobito, Equateur (one specimen, October); Buta, Oriental province (one specimen); Panga, Oriental province (one specimen); Lukolela, Equateur (group of 20 on sandbank in

Congo River, March); Lulimbi, N Kivu (one trapped); Lake Edward, N Kivu (two singles, December–January and March); Katobwe, Katanga (one) (Chapin 1939, Maes 1961 and 1993, Lippens & Wille 1976, d'Huart 1977, Dowsett 1980, Mertens 1986).

***BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica*

Banana, Bas-Congo, 10 November 1990, two (+RS). The species is known to occur along the entire west coast of Africa; its presence in Congo-Kinshasa was to be expected.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

Lake Edward, 24 April 1993, one (+ML). Garamba River, Garamba NP, 14 February 1994, three; 15 February 1994, 12 (+LE & ML). First records for Garamba NP. At the Lulimbi ringing station, Virunga NP, 14 were ringed during three consecutive northern winters, 1972–1975 (d'Huart 1977). Lippens & Wille (1976) give details of three records only.

***HERRING GULL (HEUGLIN'S GULL)** *Larus argentatus henglini*

Katanda Bay, SE Lake Edward, Virunga NP, 1 May 1994, two adults and one immature; 4 July 1994, one adult and one second-summer (ML). Field characters of adult birds corresponded with those of the race *henglini*, which is treated as a full species by some authors (e.g. Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

A Palearctic visitor to NE Africa, regular or semi-regular on the coast, e.g. Kenya, November–March; occasionally also reported inland at lakes in Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya (Britton 1980, Nikolaus 1987, Zimmerman *et al.* 1996, pers. obs). There is also a specimen from Burundi (Gaugris *et al.* 1981).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Lulimbi, Virunga NP, 4 April 1993, one adult and one immature (+ML); 21 August 1993, three immatures (+ML); 22 August 1993, two immatures (+ML). Epulu River, Okapi Wildlife Reserve, Oriental province, 29 November 1995, one immature (MS & PR). Formerly only known from three records at Ishango, on the northern shore of Lake Edward, in March 1974 (Lippens & Wille 1976).

***LITTLE TERN** *Sterna albifrons*

Lulimbi, Virunga NP, 25 October 1992, min. 600; 3–4 April 1993, min. 800; 15 October 1993, min. 200; December 1993, none; 5 May 1994, 30 (ML). When first seen in October 1992, the birds were all in non-breeding plumage and therefore not separable from possible Saunders's Tern *S. saundersi*. By April 1993, however, they had moulted into breeding plumage and, through 25x telescopes, the white on the forehead was seen to extend well over the eye. During a visit to the same site in August 1993, no Little Terns were observed.

These represent the species' furthest inland records in central Africa. In Kenya, *albifrons*-like terns have been recorded on inland lakes and hundreds are sometimes present on Lake Turkana. Only two specimens have been collected so far, one adult

saunderi at Lake Turkana and one *albifrons* at Lake Naivasha; specific identity of Turkana birds remains uncertain (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). In Sudan, Little Terns have not so far been recorded (Nikolaus 1987).

WHISKERED TERN *Chlidonias hybridus*

Virunga NP: Vitshumbi, 5 April 1992, 50; Lulimbi, 3 April 1993, 15 (+ML), 4 April 1993, ten (+ML). All records of birds in breeding plumage. Only one previous record from Lake Edward and another from Lukolela, Congo River, SW Equateur, of the Palearctic nominate ssp.; in S Katanga the African ssp. *sclateri* is known as a non-breeding visitor (Lippens & Wille 1976).

***BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger*

Boangi, SE Equateur, 17 September 1955, an adult collected on the Luluka River. The locality, situated far inland, is remarkable. First definite record for Congo-Kinshasa; the skin (in RMCA) was originally misidentified as White-winged Black Tern *C. leucopterus*. According to Chapin (1939) a specimen from Banana, collected before 1876, may have been of this species.

EUROPEAN TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Goma town, N Kivu, 18 May 1992, one. First sight record. Previously only known from four specimens, all immatures, collected at Avakubi, Oriental province (Chapin 1939), Boangi, S Equateur, Lulinga, S Kivu and Keseki, Bandundu (Louette 1988).

***BLACK-BILLED WOOD DOVE** *Turtur abyssinicus*

Garamba NP, 17 February 1994, two adults; 11 February 1996, one adult (PR & MS). Several other records from the period January–August (KS). Previously known to occur south to S Sudan and N Uganda (Urban *et al.* 1986, Nikolaus 1987).

SHELLEY'S EAGLE OWL *Bubo shelleyi*

Epulu, Okapi Wildlife Reserve, Oriental province, 3 September 1992, one adult allowing close approach in primary forest at the research station. Easternmost record of this rarely observed species, for which no details are given by Lippens & Wille (1976) and of which fewer than 20 specimens are said to be known (Fry *et al.* 1988). The other records from Congo-Kinshasa are: Avakubi, Oriental province, a feather collected in 1913 (Chapin 1939); Yangambi, Oriental province, 14 May 1950, an adult female (specimen in RMCA); Likati, Oriental province, 1 April 1952 (erroneously given as 1951 in Chapin 1954), a juvenile male (specimen at RMCA); Bunduki, Oriental province, a juvenile male, 4 November 1952 (died 7 November 1952; specimen at RMCA); Kabunga, N Kivu, a young female, probably captured early 1958 and acquired on 28 August 1959 by Antwerp Zoo, where it died in July 1970 (specimen at RMCA); Kisangani, Oriental province, 1959, two captive birds sent to Antwerp Zoo in 1959 (Chapin 1960, Schouteden 1966); Hombo, S Kivu, an adult female, 23 May 1971 (specimen at RMCA).

MOTTLED SWIFT *Tachymarptis aequatorialis*

Nsiamfumu, Bas-Congo, 10 November 1990, one in mixed group with European Swift *Apus apus* and Horus Swift *A. horus* (+RS). First record from SW Congo-Kinshasa; formerly only known from extreme east of the country (Fry *et al.* 1988).

SHINING-BLUE KINGFISHER *Alcedo quadribrachys*

Breeding records from Equateur: Ikela, SE Equateur: 8 October 1951, a nest with three young; 14 December 1952, a male incubating four eggs (Herroelen 1955); 21 January 1951, a pair seen at the entrance of a nest burrow. Mbandaka, 20 December 1957, a male incubating two eggs; 7 January 1958 an adult excavating a burrow. Bwamanda, NW Equateur, 31 December 1972, two nestlings in a hole in a rotting tree trunk near a swamp (VM). Fry *et al.* (1988) mention only one record, from the north-east of the country, where excavating was observed in October.

ROSY BEE-EATER *Merops malimbicus*

Breeding colonies found at Lilanga on the Ubangi River, 50 km WNW of Mbandaka, 15 April 1958. *c.* 200 nestholes, and near Bomenenge, 67 km downstream from Mbandaka on the Congo River, 22 April 1959, *c.* 100 nestholes in a sand bank. First definite records of colonies in Congo-Kinshasa.

LILAC-BREASTED ROLLER *Coracias caudata*

Rwindi, Virunga NP, 30 March 1991, one. Northernmost record; previously known to occur north to the Ruzizi Valley (Chapin 1939).

***BLUE-BELLIED ROLLER** *Coracias cyanogaster*

Gbadolite, Equateur: airport, 29 July 1995, two, and along Mobayi road, 24 September 1995, three. Only other records for Congo-Kinshasa are from Bili, also in Equateur, 11 November and 3 December 1989, 2 March and 3 April 1990 (Dejaifve 1990).

The map in Fry *et al.* (1988) shows the range extending into NE Congo-Kinshasa, although this is not mentioned in the accompanying text. In a later publication, however, the same author explicitly mentions the range to include the north-eastern part of the country (Fry *et al.* 1992). To our knowledge this had not been proven at the time, although Chapin (1939) suspected that the species might wander occasionally over Congo's northern border, since it had been recorded at Beso, Central African Republic, only a little north of the Ubangi River and at Kajo-Kaji near the Bahr-el-Jebel, S Sudan. From Sudan, only one other record, also from the extreme south, has been published since then (Nikolaus 1987).

BROAD-BILLED ROLLER *Eurystomus glaucurus*

Fry *et al.* (1988) state that nominate *glaucurus* is a non-breeding visitor to E Congo-Kinshasa savannas, in February–November. Actually, its range is much larger, as it has been recorded from all over the country, including from the Equateur and Bas-Congo provinces in the west, and it not only frequents savanna, but also the whole of the forest zone. Migrants arrive in Katanga from the second half of February onwards,

reaching Kasai, Equateur and the extreme north-east of the country (Garamba NP) in March–April (earliest date for central Congo: adult collected at Ikela, SE Equateur, 17 February). The last adults leave the country early October, while immatures may be observed till the end of November.

Adults undergo a complete moult in February–August, secondaries moulting ascendently from two centres at S1 and S5, rectrices starting with the central pair (R1), typically followed by the outermost pair (R6), then R2–R3–R4–R5; sometimes the outermost pair is moulted last (one of 23 birds examined). Juveniles have a partial moult in July–October, during which all body and tail feathers are replaced; moult sequence of rectrices similar to that of adults (for details see Herroelen 1964).

ABYSSINIAN GROUND HORNBILL *Bucorvus abyssinicus*

Between Kasenyi and the Semliki River, N Kivu, 1 September 1992, a pair. Southernmost record; previously known to occur south to northern shores of Lake Albert.

CASSIN'S HONEYBIRD *Prodotiscus insignis*

The distribution map in Fry *et al.* (1988) does not extend the range of this species to the central Congo basin, which is left blank, though with question marks. RMCA has specimens from three sites in Equateur, part of the blank area: Bamania (a juvenile collected on 15 October 1952); Bokeka (an adult female taken on 18 November 1955); Monieka (one collected on 31 October 1958). These specimens are included in Schouteden (1961).

WAHLBERG'S HONEYBIRD *Prodotiscus regulus*

Lulimbi, Virunga NP, 21 August 1993, two together (pair?). One of the birds called frequently while making short display flights over the tops of acacia trees. Northernmost record for Congo-Kinshasa, where previously only known to occur north to the northern shores of Lake Tanganyika (Lippens & Wille 1976); recorded, however, from Ruwenzori NP in SW Uganda (Fry *et al.* 1988).

GREATER HONEYGUIDE *Indicator indicator*

Nsiamfumu, Bas-Congo, 11 November 1990, a singing male (+RS); first record from the coastal area. Lippens & Wille (1976) and Fry *et al.* (1988) mention W Kasai as nearest range. Since then recorded from nearby Kouilou basin, Congo-Brazzaville, by Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1991).

NORTHERN WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Lippens & Wille (1976) mention only one record for the country, in the extreme north-east. There is, however, a second specimen in RMCA, from Lima, north of Butembo, N Kivu, collected on 5 January 1959. This was included in Schouteden (1962, 1963), but subsequently overlooked and omitted in a work on the birds of the Kivu by the same author (Schouteden 1968, 1969a).

RED-THROATED WRYNECK *Jynx ruficollis*

The distribution map and accompanying range description in Fry *et al.* (1988) are incomplete: RMCA has 11 specimens from Businga territory, N Equateur (Schouteden 1962) and the species is also known from Duma (Chapin 1939), Bili and Sidi (Dejaifve 1990), in extreme NW and N Equateur. These records fill the gap, indicated by a question mark, on the above-mentioned map.

ELLIOT'S WOODPECKER *Dendropicos elliotii*

The range indicated on the distribution map in Fry *et al.* (1988) leaves a blank in the whole of the north-western part of the country. Snow & Louette (1981), however, have pointed out that there are records from this region.

BROWN-BACKED WOODPECKER *Picoides obsoletus*

There is a female specimen from Bobutu, N Equateur, collected on 27 October 1959, in RMCA. Not mentioned for the north-western part of the country in Fry *et al.* (1988).

WHITE-TAILED BUSH LARK *Mirafra albicauda*

Rwindi, Virunga NP, 24–25 April 1993, up to ten (+ML); 19 December 1993, two. Southernmost records for Congo-Kinshasa; few previous records.

SPIKE-HEELED LARK *Chersomanes albofasciata*

Schouteden (1969b) mentions a record of an adult female of the race *obscurata*, collected in the Kundelungu Highlands, December 1966. Although included in Lippens & Wille (1976), this record, the only one for the country, is not mentioned by Keith *et al.* (1992). Examination of the specimen proved the identification to be correct. The nearest records are from E Angola, in southern Lunda (Traylor 1963).

CONGO SAND MARTIN *Riparia congica*

Five specimens, collected by PH near Mbandaka on 7 April 1957, had subcutaneous fat on belly and rump; testes were well developed; plumage was faded and worn, but moult had not started yet. Although this species is generally regarded as non-migratory (Chapin 1953, Turner & Rose 1989, Keith *et al.* 1992), the presence of subcutaneous fat indicates that some migratory movements may occur. This could explain the presence of the species on the Ubangi River near Bangui, Central African Republic, where a specimen was collected on 24 March 1974 (Jehl 1976) and another, a female, on 7 May 1978 (Germain & Cornet 1994).

COMMON SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Nsele, Kinshasa, 25 February 1990, several. The map and accompanying account in Keith *et al.* (1992) do not mention the occurrence of the species in the south-western part of the country, although Lynes (1938) observed some with *R. congica* at 'Léopoldville' (now Kinshasa) in November 1933 and Lippens & Wille (1976) state that it sometimes occurs in huge flocks over the Congo River near Kinshasa.

[ETHIOPIAN SWALLOW *Hirundo aethiopica*

Lulimbi, Virunga NP, 80 said to have been ringed in the period 1971–75 (d'Huart 1977) would constitute the first records for the country. Unfortunately, no notes on these records are available, so that they are best considered as in need of confirmation. The species' occurrence in Congo-Kinshasa is likely, however, as it is known from nearby Ruwenzori NP on the Ugandan side of Lake Edward (Britton 1980).]

WHITE-THROATED BLUE SWALLOW *Hirundo nigrita*

Vocalizations of this species are poorly documented. Only Serle (1949) seems to have mentioned that “[this swallow] twitters sometimes on the wing”. The following vocalizations were noted from a pair, building a nest on a concrete pole projecting less than 1 m above the surface of a forested lake at Kimwenza, near Kinshasa, on 16 June 1990. Calls included a vigorous *weetch*, a hard *vwhit*, *vwhit* and a soft *whit*, the last also given in flight. Song, only uttered by the presumed male, consisted of a soft, dry trill *pr-trrrrrrr* often mixed with disharmonic notes. Only the presumed female (which could be distinguished by a larger white throat patch and a somewhat duller plumage) was seen carrying nesting material and working on the nest, while in the meantime the presumed male perched nearby, occasionally singing.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Masisi highlands, N Kivu, 15 November 1993, four; 10 March 1994, one (ML). Few previous records.

LONG-LEGGED PIPIT *Anthus pallidiventris*

An immature female of the ssp. *esobe*, mislabelled as *A. leucophrys zenkeri*, was collected at Bwamanda, Equateur, on 15 September 1957. This locality is some 360 km NNE of Mbandaka, formerly known as the species' northernmost site (Keith *et al.* 1992). More to the west, it is now also known from as far north as Douala, Cameroon (R.J. Dowsett *in litt.*). Records from the low-water season (January–June) in Equateur suggest that the species occupies seasonally inundated grasslands, for example along the Ngiri and Sangha Rivers. Breeding season probably extends from July to January: a nest with a single young and one infertile egg was found on 7 September 1954 at Bolombo, 5 km E of Mbandaka (G. Michielsen *in litt.*); a recently fledged young was observed on 10 September 1958 in the same area; an adult was seen feeding a young bird on 3 February 1957 at Bamania; two juveniles were collected on 12 and 23 February 1954 at Iyonda. One of the three paratypes of *esobe* at RMCA, a juvenile, was collected on 3 January 1921 at Eala, Mbandaka.

The hitherto unknown juvenile plumage (based on the two specimens collected in February 1954) is as follows: feathers of head and upperparts blackish, very narrowly fringed sandy-buff; supercilium dull sandy-buff; moustachial stripe blackish; tail feathers narrow, blackish fringed rufous-brown; underparts whitish, heavily streaked blackish on breast, sparsely streaked on flanks, and washed pale brownish-cream on belly; upperwing-coverts brown, broadly fringed rufous-brown (gradually becoming narrower and fading to whitish with wear); flight feathers brown edged

and tipped rufous-brown, especially on secondaries and tertials; feather at carpal joint yellowish brown. Bare parts as in adults, but bill with pale gape.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

A male collected at Iyonda, near Mbandaka, on 27 December 1954. Not mentioned in Schouteden (1961). This is the southernmost record in the western part of the wintering range in Congo-Kinshasa. South of the country, however, the species is known to winter as far west as south-western Huila in SW Angola, further to the west than shown in Keith *et al.* (1992) (W.R.J. Dean in MS).

STRIPED PIPIT *Anthus lineiventris*

An adult male collected at km 48, Kamaniola Escarpment, S Kivu, on 1 July 1950. This is a considerable range extension, as the species was previously only known from Upemba NP, some 700 km to the south (Verheyen 1953). There are, however, three records from Akagera NP, Rwanda, which is nearer Kamaniola, at an even higher latitude (Vande weghe 1974; apparently overlooked by Keith *et al.* 1992).

RED-SHOULDERED CUCKOO-SHRIKE *Campephaga phoenicea*

Rutshuru plains, N Kivu, 3 October 1992, two adult males (+LE & ML); 2 November 1992, a pair at nest with young and an adult male 3 km further north; 6 February 1993, an adult male; 20 November 1993, two pairs. Tongo, N Kivu, 12 October 1992, an adult male. In eastern Congo-Kinshasa previously only known south to Irumu, some 500 km north of Tongo (Keith *et al.* 1992).

ANSORGE'S GREENBUL *Andropadus ansorgei*

Regularly recorded in forest patches in Kinshasa environs (Lac Ma Vallée, Kimwenza), Bombo-Lumene Game Reserve (Bateke Plateau) and Kolo-Yabi (JVL cattle ranch, Bas-Congo, 1989–90). Also Kisangani, Oriental province, May 1990. Distribution stated by Keith *et al.* (1992) to be uncertain in many areas due to confusion in the field with more widespread Little Grey Greenbul *A. gracilis*.

CAMEROON SOMBRE GREENBUL *Andropadus curvirostris*

The nest has not previously been described: one found at Belo, Ikela territory, Equateur, on 16 October 1950, consisted of a cup-shaped structure placed 1.5 m above ground and fastened onto the branch of a bush with yellowish spider web; outer layer of dry leaves, pieces of leaves and dry pieces of bark bound together with spider webs; inner layer of fine whitish plant fibres. The nest contained two nestlings about one week old, with brown-grey down, darker on back; iris brown; bill almost entirely black, gape yellow, mouth red, rear of tongue with fine dark wavy line; legs yellowish brown, feet slightly darker; claws grey. Begging calls *churr churr* and *tiut-tiut*.

PRIGOGINE'S GREENBUL *Chlorocichla prigoginei*

Forest near Djugu, Lendu Plateau, Oriental province, 7–8 February 1994, once observed singly and twice a single with a small group of Joyful Greenbuls *C. laetissima*

(+LE & ML; for details, see Pedersen 1997). First records since 1981 (Collar & Stuart 1985, Collar *et al.* 1994).

SIMPLE GREENBUL *Chlorocichla simplex*

This hitherto undescribed juvenile plumage is based on five specimens: plumage colouration similar to that of adult; rectrices slightly narrower and more pointed; iris dark brown; bill grey-brown with blackish base, gape yellow; legs and feet grey-blue, claws initially whitish (in nestlings) darkening to grey.

EQUATORIAL AKALAT *Sheppardia aequatorialis*

Nyiaragongo Volcano, N Kivu, 6 March 1992, two adults observed at *c.* 2,500 m. Formerly believed to be absent from the Kivu volcanoes (Lippens & Wille 1976).

THRUSH NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia luscinia*

Ishwa Plain, Oriental province, 10 February 1994, one singing (+LE & ML). Previously only a few records from the Katanga region, in the south-east of the country (Lippens & Wille 1976).

GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinacens*

Earliest collected specimen: 19 September, Nganza, W Kasai, first-year female; latest: 9 May, Kananga, W Kasai.

BUFF-THROATED APALIS *Apalis rufogularis*

Regularly recorded in forest patches in Kinshasa environs (Lac Ma Vallée, Kimwenza) and Kolo-Yabi (JVL cattle ranch, Bas-Congo, 1989–90). The range indicated on the distribution map in Urban *et al.* (1997) leaves a blank, with a question mark, in the south-western part of the country.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The second ringing recovery in the country was of a bird of hitherto unknown origin but with a Russian ring, found near Bobito, Equateur, on 15 January 1960 (Schouteden 1962). This bird appears to have been ringed as nestling in the region of Pasvalys (56°3'N 24°20'E) on 24 June 1954 (A. Vinokurov *in litt.*).

***ORIOLE-WARBLER** *Hypergerus atriceps*

An adult was collected at Bwamanda, Equateur, on 1 November 1959, by VM (Schouteden 1962). This record was overlooked by Lippens & Wille (1976). Chapin (1953) mentions this species between brackets, thus indicating that it had not yet been recorded in the country, and notes that its distribution extends from W Africa “eastward to . . . the vicinity of the great bend of the Ubangi River”. Urban *et al.* (1997), having apparently misread Chapin (1953), state that the species occurs in “N Zaïre (near great bend of R. Ubangi)” and thus overlooked the Schouteden record.

BLACK-THROATED WATTLE-EYE *Platysteira peltata*

Nsiamfumu, Bas-Congo, 10 November 1990, a male (+RS). First coastal record. Nearest records are from W Kasai and Bolongongo, N Cuanza Norte, NW Angola;

no records from coast in Congo-Brazzaville or N Angola (Urban *et al.* 1997, W.R.J. Dean in MS). Garamba NP, 8–9 February 1996, two (PR & MS). Northernmost record. Previously only known to occur north to Lake Kivu.

CHIN-SPOT BATIS *Batis molitor*

Kolo-Yabi, Bas-Congo, 9 June 1990, a pair. This appears to be the first record from Lower Congo, where the closely related Black-headed Batis *B. minor* is the common representative of the genus. The sighting is interesting, considering that the two species are believed to be parapatric in Congo-Kinshasa by Louette (1987), who based this statement on the fact that only *B. minor* had been found in Lower Congo. At Kolo-Yabi, however, both appear to occur together, although *B. molitor* is probably uncommon or rare: during 13 visits to that site in 1989–1990 (totalling 35 days in the field), *B. molitor* was seen only once, whereas *B. minor* was almost invariably encountered when sufficient time was spent in the right habitat (lightly wooded savanna). Nearest records are from Kasai and from Djambala, Congo-Brazzaville, where a female was collected on 18 October 1951 (Rand *et al.* 1959). Despite the supposition that the species may be more widespread in Congo-Brazzaville than records suggest (Urban *et al.* 1997), it was not found during recent field work there and is thought to be very rare (Dowsett-Lemaire 1997b and pers. comm.). It was, however, recently found at Lékoni, SE Gabon (pers. obs.).

ANGOLA BATIS *Batis minulla*

Regularly observed in Bas-Congo and on the Bateke Plateau, 1989–1990. Vocalizations, stated to be unknown by Urban *et al.* (1997), included little buzzing calls and a series of weak, high-pitched, sucking whistles *heep heep heep . . .* (resembling description of song by Dowsett-Lemaire 1997a).

LITTLE PURPLE-BANDED SUNBIRD *Nectarinia bifasciata*

Garamba NP, 12 February 1996 (MS & PR). Previously only known to occur north to Rutshuru plains. Found in NW Uganda, some 200 km east of Garamba NP (Britton 1980).

WATTLED STARLING *Creatophora cinerea*

Two birds in non-breeding plumage were collected near Ikela, SE Equateur: an adult female at Yokolo, 8 April 1951, and an adult male, Mondombe, 9 April 1956. These constitute the only records for the Equateur province and the northernmost from the central and western part of the country.

***HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

Lubumbashi, Katanga, airport, 20 March 1991 (two) and 14 July 1995 (three); town, 5 January 1996 (four) and 8 May 1996 (one). Mbuji Mayi, E Kasai, town, 8 May 1996 (one).

Considering that the northward expansion of the species had already reached Ndola, just across the border in Zambia and only some 200 km south-east from Lubumbashi, in December 1966, and was at Lake Mweru in 1972 (Benson *et al.*

1971, Dowsett 1976), it seems remarkable that it has not been reported earlier from southern Congo-Kinshasa, although Summers-Smith (1998) in error quoted Harwin & Irwin (1966) as stating that it already was present there.

***BLACK-CHINNED WEAVER** *Ploceus nigrimentum*

Bankana, near Bombo-Lumene Game Reserve (Bateke Plateau), March 1991, a pair observed at close range in open savanna (MC). This record links up with the species' known range on the Bateke Plateau on the northern side of the Congo River, in Congo-Brazzaville and SE Gabon (Lékoni area); to the south it has only been recorded in the Bailundu Highlands of west-central Angola. Listed as 'Vulnerable' by Collar *et al.* (1994).

WEYNS'S WEAVER *Ploceus weynsi*

At Mbandaka, on 6 January 1959, a group of about 100 birds was seen to assemble with other *Ploceus* before dusk and to fly off in mixed groups to forested islands in the Congo River, where several hundreds of birds went to roost (PH). In Bokuma, about half of the birds at a tree roost containing several hundred of *Ploceus* were *P. weynsi* (GM).

Food (3 stomachs of males): fruit from *Beilschmiedia discolor* and *Alchornea cordifolia*. Breeding: on the basis of development of gonads of 13 specimens, breeding occurs from April (March?) to June. Moulting of remiges (specimens collected by PH and now at RMCA): adults (5 males, 1 female), mid-September to early November; juveniles (4 males, 1 female), mid-June to end October.

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Appendix: Gazetteer

Locality*	Province (Congo-Kinshasa) or Country**	Coordinates	
Akagera NP	Rwanda	1°32'S	30°38'E
Assen (Transvaal)	South Africa	25°11'S	27°36'E
Avakubi (Ituri)	Prov. Orientale	1°24'N	27°40'E
Bailundu Highlands	Angola c.	12°00'S	16°00'E
Bamania (Equateur)	Equateur	0°00'	18°20'E
Banana	Bas-Congo	6°00'S	12°25'E
Bankana	Kinshasa	4°38'S	16°24'E
Belo (Tshuapa)	Equateur	0°32'S	23°13'E
Beso	C.A.R.	5°07'N	19°29'E
Bili (Ubangi)	Equateur	4°34'N	19°43'E
Boangi (Monkoto)	Equateur	1°53'S	20°57'E
Bobito (Ubangi)	Equateur	2°57'N	19°25'E
Bobutu (Mongala)	Equateur	3°35'N	20°31'E
Boguela (Mongala)	Equateur	3°33'N	20°33'E
Bokala (Ubangi)	Equateur	2°10'N	19°32'E
Bokeka (Equateur)	Equateur	0°41'N	19°57'E
Bokilio (Ubangi)	Equateur	3°46'N	19°03'E
Bokuma (Equateur)	Equateur	0°06'S	18°41'E
Bokwokoto (Equateur)	Equateur	0°32'N	18°03'E
Bolima (Equateur)	Equateur	0°03'N	19°23'E
Bolongongo (Cuanza Norte)	Angola	8°28'S	15°16'E
Bombo-Lumene Game Reserve	Kinshasa	4°30'S	16°08'E
Bomenenge (Equateur)	Equateur	0°24'S	17°54'E
Botambi	C.A.R.	4°12'N	18°30'E
Budjala (Ubangi)	Equateur	2°39'N	19°42'E
Bunduki (Bas-Uele)	Prov. Orientale	2°29'N	23°20'E
Buta (Bas-Uele)	Prov. Orientale	2°49'N	24°50'E
Bwamanda (Ubangi)	Equateur	3°10'N	19°15'E
Djambala	Congo-Brazzaville	2°32'S	14°45'E
Djugu (Ituri)	Prov. Orientale	1°55'N	30°30'E
Duma (Ubangi)	Equateur	3°54'N	18°41'E
Eala (Equateur)	Equateur	0°04'N	18°20'E
Epulu (Ituri) Prov.	Orientale	1°23'N	28°36'E
Garamba NP	Prov. Orientale	c.4°13'N	29°24'E
Gbadolite	Equateur	4°14'N	20°59'E
Goma	Nord-Kivu	1°40'S	29°14'E
Gundu (Equateur)	Equateur	0°55'N	18°08'E
Hombo (Bukavu)	Sud-Kivu	1°52'S	28°27'E
Ikela (Tshuapa)	Equateur	1°08'S	23°05'E
Irumu	Prov. Orientale	1°29'N	29°51'E
Ishango, Lake Edward	Nord-Kivu	0°08'S	29°36'E
Ishwa Plain (Ituri)	Prov. Orientale	2°12'N	31°10'E
Iyonda (Equateur)	Equateur	0°01'S	18°13'E
Kabinda	Kasaï Oriental	6°8'S	24°29'E
Kabunga	Nord-Kivu	1°40'S	28°10'E
Kajo-Kaji	Sudan	3°52'N	31°40'E

Kamaniola	Sud-Kivu	2°46'S	29°00'E
Kananga (ex-Luluabourg)	Kasaï Occidental	5°53'S	22°26'E
Kasansa	Kasaï Oriental	6°33'S	23°44'E
Kasenyi	Nord-Kivu	1°23'N	30°26'E
Katanda Bay, Lake Edward	Nord-Kivu	0°51'S	29°22'E
Katobwe	Katanga	8°51'S	26°05'E
Keseki	Bandundu	2°07'S	16°32'E
Kimwenza	Kinshasa	4°27'S	15°18'E
Kisangani (ex-Stanleyville)	Prov. Orientale	0°33'N	25°14'E
Kolo-Yabi	Bas-Congo	5°25'S	14°49'E
Kundelungu Highlands	Katanga	c.10°00'S	27°50'E
Kungu (Ubangi)	Equateur	2°46'N	19°12'E
Lékoni	Gabon	1°34'S	14°13'E
Likati (Bas-Uele)	Prov. Orientale	3°20'N	23°57'E
Lilanga (Equateur)	Equateur	0°12'N	17°50'E
Lima (Beni)	Nord-Kivu	0°12'N	29°18'E
Lubumbashi (ex-Elisabethville)	Katanga	11°41'S	27°29'E
Lukolela (Equateur)	Equateur	1°07'S	17°11'E
Lulimbi, Virunga NP	Nord-Kivu	0°30'S	29°38'E
Lulinga	Sud-Kivu	2°20'S	27°36'E
Mai-Ndombe, Lake	Bandundu	2°00'S	18°20'E
Masisi Highlands	Nord-Kivu	c.1°24'S	28°49'E
Mbandaka (ex-Coquilhatville)	Equateur	0°04'N	18°16'E
Mbuji Mayi	Kasaï Oriental	6°10'S	23°39'E
Mondombe (Tshuapa)	Equateur	0°54'S	22°46'E
Monieka (Equateur)	Equateur	0°41'N	19°57'E
Muanda (=Moanda)	Bas-Congo	5°55'S	12°21'E
Ndola	Zambia	13°00'S	28°39'E
Nganza	Kasaï Occidental	5°58'S	22°28'E
Nioka (Ituri)	Prov. Orientale	2°09'N	30°40'E
Nsele	Kinshasa	4°18'S	15°18'E
Nsiamfumu	Bas-Congo	5°47'S	12°17'E
Nyiaragongo Volcano	Nord-Kivu	1°31'S	29°15'E
Okapi Wildlife Reserve	Prov. Orientale	1°45'N	28°30'E
Panga	Prov. Orientale	1°51'N	26°25'E
Ruwenzori NP	Uganda	0°15'N	29°57'E
Rwindi, Virunga NP	Nord-Kivu	0°47'S	29°17'E
Sidi (Ubangi)	Equateur	5°01'N	19°51'E
Songa	Katanga	8°06'S	25°01'E
Tongo	Nord-Kivu	1°13'S	29°19'E
Upemba NP	Katanga	c.9°10'S	26°40'E
Vitshumbi, Virunga NP	Nord-Kivu	0°39'S	29°22'E
Yangambi	Prov. Orientale	0°47'N	24°24'E
Yokolo (Tshuapa)	Equateur	0°36'S	23°04'E

*Administrative division between brackets; if mentioned for Congo-Kinshasa, this is the district, the division of the province before 1961.

**C.A.R.: Central African Republic.

Provinces in Congo-Kinshasa: Bas-Congo=Lower Congo, Prov. Orientale=Oriental province, Kasaï Occidental=West Kasaï, Kasaï Oriental=East Kasaï, Nord-Kivu=North Kivu, Sud-Kivu=South Kivu. Prov. Orientale and Katanga were formerly Haute-Zaire and Shaba respectively.